

**TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEGREE IN MEDIA RESEARCH AND PRACTICE AT
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER**

PREPARED BY: IAN MACGILLIVRAY, DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

I. SUMMARY

This item recommends approval for University of Colorado Boulder (UCB) to offer a Doctor of Philosophy in Media Research and Practice.

II. BACKGROUND

COMMISSION AUTHORITY

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's role and responsibility in the review and approval of new academic programs at institutions operating under a performance contract is defined in §23-5-129(6)(b), which states that new and modified program proposals shall be reviewed and approved only on the basis of fit with the institution's statutory role and mission.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

The following is summarized from UCB's proposal:

A major lesson of the dramatic transformations in media and technology witnessed over recent decades is that the problems and opportunities facing any one discipline will be productively as well as disruptively shared with others. This convergence of problems and opportunities is especially visible at the leading edge of scholarly and creative work, where advanced students and researchers in strategic communication, journalism and media studies regularly explore common ground. The Doctoral Program in Media Research and Practice is designed to take advantage of this situation by combining advanced research and practice in three related disciplines under a single umbrella. The track in Strategic Communication offered by the Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Media Design, the track in Journalism Studies offered by the Department of Journalism and the track in Media Studies offered by the Department of Media Studies are accordingly parallel tracks under a single, overarching heading. In addition to exploiting the efficiencies such a grouping makes possible by pooling administrative, financial, technical and pedagogical resources, the umbrella Program in Media Research and Practice ensures

that students, scholars and creators in the three disciplines involved pursue their studies, research and creative work in an interconnected setting that encourages collaboration at all levels of doctoral training and in every facet of faculty effort.

Additional information on this proposed degree, unrelated to fit with statutory role and mission, is in Appendix A.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

This degree supports UCB's statutory role and mission, which states:

(a) The Boulder campus of the university of Colorado shall be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards. The Boulder campus of the university of Colorado shall offer a comprehensive array of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs. The Boulder campus of the university of Colorado has exclusive authority to offer graduate programs in law. The Colorado commission on higher education, in consultation with the board of regents, shall designate those graduate level programs that are the primary responsibility of the Boulder campus of the university of Colorado. The university has the responsibility to provide on a statewide basis, utilizing when possible and appropriate the faculty and facilities of other educational institutions, those graduate level programs. The commission shall include in its funding recommendations a level of general fund support for these programs. [§ 23-20-101, C.R.S.]

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b), department staff finds that UCB's proposed degree is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission, meets Pathways requirements and meets the 120 credit cap requirement for bachelor's degrees. University of Colorado's Board of Regents approved the program at its September 11, 2014 meeting.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve University of Colorado Boulder's proposal to offer Doctor of Philosophy degree Media Research and Practice.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-5-129 Governing boards - performance contract - authorization – operations

(6) While operating pursuant to a performance contract negotiated pursuant to this section, the governing board of a state institution of higher education:

(b) Need not consult with nor obtain approval from the Colorado commission on higher education to create, modify, or eliminate academic and vocational programs offered by the institution, so long as such creations, modifications, and eliminations are consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. Institutions shall submit information to the department demonstrating that the creation or modification of an academic or career and technical education program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. The Colorado commission on higher education shall have the authority to override the creation or modification of an academic or vocational program if the change made by the governing board is inconsistent with the institution's statutory role and mission.

APPENDIX:

Appendix A: Supplemental Information

APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This supplemental information is unrelated to the proposed degree's fit with the institution's statutory role and mission. The following is summarized from the institution's proposal:

EVIDENCE OF NEED

Employer Demand: Jobs in the area of strategic communication and design are increasing according to many industry publications (ABC News, U.S. News, etc.). A recent Bankrate study puts advertising jobs at the top of the list in terms of jobs offering best return on investment, above traditional jobs like those for economists, engineers, lawyers and physicians (Susanna Kim, "Advertising Jobs Lead List of Careers, Offering Best Return on Investment," ABC News, June 11 2013). And Public Relations is one of the fastest growing majors in the United States. All of this has led to a heavy demand for tenure track professors who research and teach strategic communication courses. In fact, many tenure track positions in advertising and public relations remained unfilled in the last couple of years for lack of PhDs in this area. For a listing of jobs, please visit:

<http://www.aejmc.org/jobads/> and <https://chronicle.com/section/jobs/61>. Each year since 1989, researchers at the University of Georgia have monitored trends in journalism/mass communication (JMC) education by surveying a scientific sample of the nearly 500 post-secondary programs in the United States and their more than 50,000 students. The latest report, for 2012, shows that enrollment in the nation's PhD programs in JMC had risen to 1,887 in 2012, compared to 394 in 1988. But do these JMC doctoral students find work? The latest Georgia study showed that the number of full-time faculty in JMC has increased from 4,126 in 1989 to 7,448 in 2012. Moreover, a reading of the 45 "Journalism" faculty positions announced in September 2013 on the website of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication shows that 35 announcements (78.8 percent) required the PhD and an additional four (8.9 percent) listed the doctorate as "preferred." The proposed program will meet this market need squarely. Finally, a review of PhD programs nationwide reveals that, of the 32 doctoral programs in journalism/mass communication with enrollments above 25, only three (the universities of Maryland, Missouri and Texas) offer doctoral programs that focus explicitly on journalism.

As is already true of graduates of UCB's existing doctoral track in Media Studies, Media Studies PhDs in MDRP will find careers in a variety of sectors, from academic positions at colleges and universities to work in government and the corporate world, and from consulting to work for nongovernmental agencies. The majority of UCB's current students have secured academic appointments at institutions like the University of Texas, the University of Iowa, New York University, the University of New Mexico, American University, the University of Memphis and Temple University, as well as at major academic institutions in other countries, including Australia, Brazil, the Netherlands and Switzerland. These successes underscore the remark made by one of Media Studies' outside evaluators, Prof. Wasko of the University of Oregon, who specifically points to the number of highly

visible scholars the track has produced in the past. In addition, as noted above, academic job prospects in the general area of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) to which Media Studies belongs are currently excellent.

Student Demand: As noted above, there is a growing demand for PhDs to teach advertising and public relations courses at the university level. This growth is driven by an increasing demand for these majors at universities across the nation. In addition to growing demand in the U.S., there is increased demand from international students. See Council of Graduate Schools (2013), “First-time enrollment of international graduate students up 10 percent”; Katy Hopkins (2012), “International students continue to flock to U.S. colleges, Grad Schools,” USnews.com; Open Doors (2013), “International students in the United States and Study Abroad by American Students are at All-Time High.” Given how many academic positions are available in journalism, we can expect strong student demand for our Journalism doctoral track. Nevertheless, especially as our faculty grows during the first five-year period of its existence, the program plans to limit admissions carefully in order to maintain a favorable faculty-to-student ratio. We project that MDRP’s enrollments will rise from 20 to 32 students over the program’s first five years. We expect journalism’s contribution to that rise to be 5 students by Year 5. The student-demand situation for the PhD track in Media Studies differs from that of its sister programs in MDRP in that a doctoral program in the discipline already exists at CU-Boulder, and has done for decades. Like most of CU-Boulder’s doctoral programs, we anticipate continuing to recruit a pool of well-qualified applicants from across the United States and internationally. The portion of students who are Colorado residents at the time of application tends to be exceeded by out-of-state applicants. However, we make a special effort to attract Colorado residents whenever possible. Taking MDRP as a whole, enrollment will begin with a total of 20 students, which is the number of students currently enrolled in the existing Media Studies PhD track. Assuming that the Journalism track will have recruited 5 students, that the Strategic Communication will have recruited another 5 and that the Media Studies track’s location in a more attractive interdisciplinary PhD program in an exciting new interdisciplinary college promotes 10% growth in its numbers, the total should reach 32 students by Year 5.

DUPLICATION

MDPR as a whole has no parallel in the CU system, the state of Colorado or the wider region. The uniqueness of each individual track is also worth stressing. No public university in the state of Colorado currently offers a PhD in Strategic Communication. In fact, the only program that offers a PhD in Advertising in the world is the University of Texas. Most universities in the nation offer a PhD in Communication or Media and Information, of which strategic communication is usually one of the concentrations. However, there are no PhD programs in the state of Colorado that offer even a doctoral-level track or concentration in Strategic Communication (i.e., Advertising and/or Public Relations). The PhD track in Journalism is unique in Colorado in that it directly addresses journalism. Colorado State University offers a PhD in Public Communication and Technology that focuses on “the role of information in the public’s understandings of contemporary issues and the impact of new communication technologies in people’s lives,” but the program does not address journalism

per se. The University of Denver offers a PhD in Communication, but, as at CSU, none of its three concentrations (Communication and Culture, Interpersonal and Family Communication, and Rhetoric and Communication Ethics) touches on journalism. Finally, CU-Boulder already has the premiere doctoral program in Media Studies in the state of Colorado. Colorado State University and the University of Denver both have doctoral degrees in media research, both established after UCB's and neither of which has the unique emphasis on the role of media in culture and politics that UCB's does. Moreover, thanks to its place in CMCI, Media Studies PhD students and faculty will be able to draw directly on the insights and resources of disciplines elsewhere far less accessible—in particular media production through the doctoral program in Critical Media Practices and data analytics and informatics through the doctoral program in Information Science.